

A Girl in School Uniform (Walks Into a Bar)

By Lulu Raczka

***PERUSAL COPY ONLY
HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL
DO NOT DISTRIBUTE***

Represented by Rachel Taylor/Anthony Mestriner at Casarotto and Ramsay Associates.

NOTES

- Most of the play will take place in darkness. If you wish, other non-electrical lighting can be used to aid certain sections.
- The characters speak fast. When there are moments of pause, these are often either a chance to catch a breath – or indicate a change of thought. Rarely is there full hesitation.

We are in a bar. Not a pub. A bar. The walls are a dark colour, and you assume, that colour is peeling. It also has a dark floor, and you assume that this floor is sticky. But unlike the floor, or the walls, the drinks are in Technicolor, and served without ice. You only come here when you have already been drinking elsewhere, and elsewhere has closed.

In this bar will be two women. Or girls.

One is a schoolgirl. She has a pleated skirt, a white shirt and a woollen jumper. She has smart shoes and white socks. Her hair is brushed and her face is fresh. She might be carrying books. She might not. But you can easily recall an image of her holding books.

You look at her and you think: This is a schoolgirl.

The other is not a schoolgirl. She wears make-up and tight clothes. Even her bra is tight, which you can make out through the other tight fabrics. Everything is also short and low. She may or may not be smoking. But you can easily recall an image of her smoking.

You look at her and you think: This woman is. Actually – you do not think this woman is – you think this woman is not. This woman is not a schoolgirl. And this woman is not many other things also.

ACT ONE

A girl in school uniform walks into a bar

The woman who is not – BELL – stands in the bar.

She stands besides a stack of glasses, methodically running a cloth over glass after glass.

She is bored and tired.

She is alone.

A noise.

A crash?

She drops the glass.

Nothing.

Fuck.

This is so stupid.

She looks down at the shards of glass around her, annoyed.

She crouches to pick them up, quickly, but carefully.

That noise again. Fuck.

She stays crouched, listening.

The noise! But closer.

She stands up, bracing herself.

BELL I have a gun you know.

A girl appears.

A girl in school uniform.

Bell double takes. Is it? No. It isn't.

PART ONE – *MISSING*

STEPH Hi –

BELL looks at STEPH. A girl in school uniform. And she full on laughs.

BELL No way.

STEPH Do you work here?

BELL Why – you want to?
I actually think the costume would really work.
I've always wanted to just properly run with a theme, you know?

STEPH I am *not* going to work here.

BELL Pity. Really flexible hours.

STEPH I'm looking for a girl.

BELL Not that kind of bar honey
I can't just get you a girl.

STEPH A friend.

BELL Can't get you one of those either.

STEPH No. I'm looking for *my* friend.

BELL Ah right.
 I haven't seen her.

STEPH You don't know what she looks like.

BELL She look like you?

STEPH She was dressed like this.

BELL Then I haven't seen her.

STEPH She came in here.

BELL She didn't.

STEPH How would you know?

BELL Let me tell you the sad fact of my sad life.
 No one comes in here anymore.
 With everything going on outside – no one comes in here.
 So if someone does come in here
 Literally anyone
 I remember

STEPH Right.
 -
 But can you just look at a picture of her?

BELL If you clean some glasses?

STEPH Ok...

BELL I was joking...?

STEPH Please will you just look at a picture?

BELL If I look at the picture -
 Will you tell me where you got your dinky little outfit?

And with this, unimpressed, STEPH shows BELL the picture.

STEPH Here it is.

There's a reaction. A strong one, BELL tries to hide it – but too late – STEPH has seen it.

BELL So
 Your skirt
 Did singing birds wrap it around you this morning?

STEPH So you really don't recognise her?

BELL No.

STEPH Ok. I get that. But if you could just look again?

BELL Ok – I hate to break up this sparky thing we have going on for some
 basic tabloid hysteria –
 But won't your parents be worried about you?
 It'll be dark soon –
 And girls like you are the kind that actually turn up on the news when
 they go missing

STEPH There's not been a blackout in a while.

BELL And you really think one isn't due?

STEPH The sooner you look at the picture
 The sooner I will leave
 Go home
 And be away from this place whenever the blackout does strike.

BELL takes the picture and looks again. Nothing. She shrugs.

BELL Still no.
 So...

STEPH Ok well.
 Is there someone else I could check with?

BELL See everyday as the earth rotates around the sun we get these neat
 processes colloquially termed "sunsets" –

STEPH Maybe her name will ring a bell.

Charlie.

-

Charlotte Jones?

BELL flinches at the name. But it's different this time - she is furious.

BELL Just leave.

Finally, feeling the full weight of the anger, STEPH leaves. BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. *STEPH enters. BELL prepares herself, this time. It's as if she puts on a mask.*

STEPH Hi.

BELL Hi.

STEPH I was here before.

BELL Honey, don't be so hard on yourself –
You think anyone could forget a girl like you?

STEPH Good. Well do you remember anything about my friend?
Charlotte Jones?

BELL How old are you?

STEPH Charlie is almost 16 and she's -

BELL Are you also almost 16?

STEPH No I'm

BELL Can I see some ID?

STEPH ID?

BELL Yes – the acronym for identification
Wait.
That doesn't work.
That would just be I.
Does the D stand for something else?

You have clothes that suggest someone pays a lot for you to know
Things
Please
Bestow upon me your great knowledge.

STEPH As if anyone actually cares about ID anymore.

BELL Wow. That school is just robbing your parents blind.
So I'll try and give you something for free.
I care about ID.
Because if someone finds out that I let minors in here
This bar will lose its licence
And I will lose my job
And what will a little girl like me do without her grand vocation?

STEPH You know that with everything that's going on
No one is gonna care about a 16 year old standing in a bar

BELL You know that
I know that
But if we don't at least pretend to keep up appearances
How will we even stand up in the morning?

STEPH Why won't you just help me?

BELL I promise I will.
Once I have some Identification.

STEPH begins to leave.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. STEPH enters. BELL sees her, ignores her. Mask intact.

STEPH Wait
Wait
Wait –
Here it is - my ID.
See.
I'm 19.

BELL Well this is fake.

STEPH Oh come on!

BELL This is just laminated paper.
Do you have a laminator?

STEPH Are you kidding?

BELL No. I am pretty curious actually.
See if you don't have a laminator –
And you seem like the kind of person that would have a laminator
But if you don't it means you went to a place to get it laminated
And then I'm curious about where that place was
And if people use it in general
Do people still laminate things?
I mean
Menus
School notices
Fake IDs – clearly
Then I'm running out of options

STEPH Why do you do this?
Are you lonely?

BELL Yes desperately.
But unfortunately for you
The intimate bar chat is reserved for paying customers.

STEPH Are you saying you want me to buy a drink?

BELL You know
I'll confess
I do enjoy money

STEPH But a second ago...

BELL So you're not going to buy a drink?

STEPH Fine.
I'll have a.
A...
-

You're pouring.

STEPH A soda water then.

BELL Yeah we don't do that.

STEPH A diet coke.

BELL Out of that.

STEPH Pepsi? Diet.

BELL shrugs.

So you have nothing?

BELL What can I say?
Not a good time for store cupboards.

STEPH I thought you wanted money?

BELL With all this learning
I guess I'm valuing different things in life
Fresh air
A good book
Maybe I'm realising that my need to consume –
To need material possessions -

STEPH No.
Just shut up
I've tried
I've tried doing whatever you want to make you talk to me
But you're just doing it on purpose
Because for some reason
For some stupid reason
You don't like me and you don't want to help
But – No. Shut up.
Just listen
I
Know
That
She
Came

In
Here

BELL She didn't

STEPH She did

BELL She didn't

STEPH She did

BELL She did not

STEPH She did too

BELL She definitely did not

STEPH She did because you flinched

BELL I what?

STEPH You flinched.

BELL I flinched?

STEPH At her picture. You flinched.

BELL Oh you got me

STEPH She came in here
You saw her
And then
-
Then she went missing

BELL Missing?

STEPH Missing.
For weeks and weeks and.
And.

BELL -

Fine.
You're right.
She did come in here.

STEPH What?

BELL She came in here.
She asked some questions.
And she left.

STEPH And you didn't tell me because?

BELL -
It's funny.
-
Your friend isn't the first girl to come in here you know
Girls like you
And your friend
They like coming to places like this
Impress their friends by going to some scary bar
In a bad neighbourhood while there's a blackout
You know
Show they're tough or something
Show they're above it all
I guess maybe they think nothing bad could actually happen to them
Probably cause nothing bad has ever actually happened to them
-
One other girl never made it home you know
I know that cause her dad came in here looking for her
All angry and broken
And I told him
Why should I care about your daughter
Compared to all of the other missing girls?

STEPH -
You know.
This place?
It's gross.

BELL Oh trust me.
That's just how I like it.

STEPH Oh.
 And you know you're wrong
 She wasn't on the news
 Even girls like me don't make the news anymore.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL stands alone. No STEPH. She waits. No STEPH.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL stands alone. No STEPH. She paces. No STEPH

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL stands alone. No STEPH. She thinks: fuck this. She doesn't care. No STEPH.

BLACKOUT.

PART TWO – *THEY FOUND HER.*

LIGHTS UP. STEPH enters. Long pause.

STEPH They found her.

BELL - - - - -

STEPH Charlie. They found her.

BELL Yes.

STEPH So um. I. I wanted to tell you because.

BELL I'm sorry.

STEPH You're not.

BELL I.

STEPH But I wanted to tell you and.

BELL	I am. Sorry.
STEPH	Thank you.
BELL	So why are you here?
STEPH	To tell you and. And I need to find Tracy.
BELL	Who now?
STEPH	Her mum.
BELL	- Her mum?
STEPH	Yes. Her mum.
BELL	Seriously If she looked like you Why is her mum in a place that looked like this?
STEPH	Charlie was adopted. That's why she came here She was trying to find her mum
BELL	So it's the end of the world or something And she's trying to track down her budget mum Got it
STEPH	No. She wanted to meet her You know In case
BELL	Yeah I know Tick one off the bucket list in case anything happened right? - Woops. Too late.
STEPH	I'm just here to find Tracy.

Did you know her?

BELL And why would I know her?

STEPH She was a regular here.
Charlie knew that
It's why she came

BELL Look around you
I have no regulars

STEPH Before all this
She was a regular

BELL Hang on
Why are you still looking?
Because you know
Now "*they've found her*"
Doesn't that ruin the whole reunion thing?

STEPH I think she should know

BELL And how are you gonna tell her if you can't even tell me?

STEPH I did tell you

BELL No you stated a phrase from a cop show
"*They found her*"
But can you say it without the euphemism?
Can you say
You know
That she *is dead*?

STEPH -

BELL Cause when you say "they found her"
That's what you mean right?
That "they" –
As in the police
Found "her" –
As in her body
And "body"

As in corpse

STEPH Oh my god!

BELL If I'm freaking you out
How can you talk to her?
You need to say it

STEPH Say what?

BELL Say my friend is dead.

STEPH I can say it.

BELL Then say it.

STEPH My friend is.
Is.
-

BELL 3 outta 4 – so close

STEPH I'm not doing this

BELL Oh.
Denial.
The first stage.
Don't you wanna hurry through them?
Trust me – you wanna get to anger
It's the fun one

STEPH Why won't you ever just help me?

BELL You think I'm not helping?
You'd pay a professional good money for this

STEPH Just tell me:
Do you know where Tracy is?

BELL Does it matter?
You can't tell her anyway.

STEPH	Fine. My friend is dead.
BELL	Now say it to her.
STEPH	What?
BELL	I'm her. Tell me she's dead.
STEPH	My friend is
BELL	She's my daughter
STEPH	Fine. Your daughter is dead. - - There? Can you tell me now?
BELL	How is she dead?
STEPH	In a blackout
BELL	People don't die <i>of blackout</i> It's not cancer
STEPH	Something happened In a blackout
BELL	And so you've seen it?
STEPH	What?
BELL	The body – you have seen the body?
STEPH	- - - - -
BELL	So you haven't. And so you don't actually know what happened to her.

STEPH I was told.

BELL By the police?

STEPH No by her family –
You think the police are gonna come round to my house and ask?
Police talk to families.

BELL So what did they see?

STEPH What?

BELL Did they see the body?

STEPH Oh my god

BELL Did they?

STEPH I guess they must have done yeah

BELL And you feel good about
“I guess they must have done yeah”?

STEPH Why does it matter?

BELL You think it won’t matter to a mother how her daughter died?

STEPH It was an accident.
I’ll say it was an accident.

BELL So that’s what they said. The police?

STEPH Yes well -

BELL And you’re going with that line are you?

STEPH With everything that’s going on

BELL With everything that’s going on

STEPH These things happen.

BELL These things happen.

STEPH Stop it.

BELL Stop it.

STEPH Stop it!

BELL Go see the body

STEPH Excuse me.

BELL Go see the body.

STEPH Are you joking?

BELL Go see the body.
-
Then come back and tell me it was an accident

STEPH Like. Seriously?

BELL Yes. And then I'll help you.

STEPH How do I even know if you know where Tracy is?

BELL You don't.

STEPH Why am I doing this?

BELL I don't know.
Why did you come here?

STEPH Because I can't do nothing.

BELL Then don't do nothing.
Go see the body.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. STEPH enters.

BELL Seen it?

STEPH I'm not going.

BELL Take as long as you need.
Not like she can get any deader.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP.

STEPH I'm not going.
No. Listen.
I'm. I don't want to. I think it's important to listen to what they've said.
Who am I to not trust in the.

BELL You say this is your best friend?

STEPH Yeah...

BELL Then why don't you care what happened to her?

STEPH I know what happened to her.

BELL Ok. Then what happened to her.

STEPH An accident

BELL How can you believe that shit?

STEPH I mean. What could have happened?

BELL Oh come on
You've said it yourself
"With everything that's going on"
What do you think happened?

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL alone. Awaits STEPH. She doesn't come.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. STEPH enters. She looks pleased with herself. Or, pleased as she can be under the circumstances.

STEPH	Hi.
BELL	Did you see it?
STEPH	I went to the police.
BELL	Did you see it?
STEPH	I went to the police and I.
BELL	But did you see it?
STEPH	I went to the police and I spoke to them and.
BELL	But. Did. You. See. It?
STEPH	Can you just let me tell the story please? - I went to the police station and I asked about Charlie – And – And I told them I was her sister – Cause you know – They're not gonna let some random see her are they?
BELL	Smart.
STEPH	It was. And they're still like – We don't have you on file – So I just start crying – All out properly crying –
BELL	I bet you're so good at that.
STEPH	And they get really funny.
BELL	They would.

STEPH And then one of the guys takes me through to this investigation room
And he sits me down with this file and then he leaves me
And he.

BELL What was in the file?

STEPH I dunno.

BELL You didn't look?

STEPH No.

BELL Oh my god.

STEPH It was a police file.
I'm not going to just look inside some police file document thing am I?
What if he came back in and I was just looking in this file and he.
-
I could get in trouble.

BELL Look at that face.
Who's gonna put you in trouble?

STEPH What could be in there anyway?

BELL I don't know
But I'm sure it wasn't letters to Santa

STEPH So then he comes back and he gives me some biscuits

BELL What kind of biscuits?

STEPH Erm – I think they're called Vienese –

BELL Oh my god I don't care

STEPH And we chat about everything that's going on
And then he explained how you know.
-
With everything that's going on.

BELL With everything that's going on.

STEPH With everything that's going on.
We need to be brave and we need to trust and.

BELL And he told you it was an accident?

STEPH Think about everything that happens in a blackout –
Cars crashing – generators you know.
Breaking.

BELL You're right
Generators breaking does tend to make women just disappear
Doesn't it?
You know what
Maybe they're all just holograms
So when the power goes out
So do they

STEPH There are real accidents you know

BELL Yes. There are.
And actually – now I come to think of it
Your friend Charlie probably did die in an accident.
Right see –
Charlie –
She probably didn't mean to be out in a blackout.
So that was an accident.
And the person who killed her –
He probably didn't plan on killing her when he woke up that morning
But then there was a blackout and he thought what the hell!
They'll just count it as another "accident"
Let's do this!

STEPH You're fucked up. You know that?

BELL Yes.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL alone on stage - waits.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL alone on stage - waits. She really waits, where is STEPH?

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. BELL alone on stage - waits. Frustrated. Guilty.

BLACKOUT.

PART THREE – *THE DARK*

LIGHTS UP. STEPH enters.

BELL	Honey! You're home!
STEPH	You were right.
BELL	Wow.
STEPH	My mum's friend she. We thought maybe she'd left the city – You know – Like a lot of people are doing – But then my mum found her – In bed – Not an accident. And I. The back door it was broken and.
BELL	I'm sorry.
STEPH	And what if that happened to her. - So I wanted to find Tracy.
BELL	To tell her?
STEPH	No. Charlie was looking for her and. And maybe if we look for her too. We'll.

We'll find out what happened to her.

BELL Oh fuck off

STEPH What?

BELL So confession –
I do – did – know Tracy

STEPH What??

BELL And this was not her fault

STEPH Why didn't you tell me you knew her?

BELL Because I wanted to know your motives first
And now I know them
I'm glad I didn't.
You think she did this?

STEPH No –
I'm not saying –

BELL You are
You're saying she had something to do with this
And she didn't

STEPH How do you know?

BELL As you said
She was a regular
And as I've said many many times
I don't have regulars anymore
So your friend didn't have much luck finding her
Did she?

STEPH Well maybe she did somewhere else

BELL There is nowhere else

STEPH You seem to know a lot about all of this

BELL I know pretty much everything there is to know about all this
 And so do you
 Because there is very little to know

STEPH I'm going to find her

BELL Oh yeah
 How?

BLACKOUT.

COMPLETE CAN'T-SEE-YOUR-HAND-IN-FRONT-OF-YOUR-FACE BLACKOUT.

Is anything coming back on?

They wait. They really wait. Hoping, praying something will come back on.

But nothing does.

Once it's clear they're in a real blackout, BELL kicks into action and begins securing the building. She uses a lamp/torch/something-that-runs-off-batteries to do this.

STEPH objects to the use of the light.

STEPH You shouldn't waste that.

BELL I know.

And STEPH starts her routine: she sits down, hugging her knees, and begins to count to herself. Whispered, but audible. She has done this many, many times before.

As BELL finishes up, she realises what STEPH is doing, she's confused. She starts laughing.

BELL Have I wandered into one of those safety videos?
 Is it time for you to stand up and give a big smile.
 It'll all be ok!!
 Just sit and count until it's over?

STEPH keeps counting. BELL is enthralled. She finds this funny. She starts trying to throw her off, randomly shouting numbers at her.

STEPH holds strong, and BELL keeps talking. A nervous tic. She can't keep still.

BELL

Well aren't you doing well?

If you get to a million I'll buy you a chocolate bar.

-

You know what.

I bet I could get people who'd pay to watch this.

Whenever I see weird shit like this – I think

God.

I bet there's a market for it.

-

See I find this so funny right

Cause this whole time you've been strolling into my bar

Acting like it's the most normal thing in the world

And now look at you.

-

Anyway.

Don't worry.

This place has great locks.

Why do you think I'm always here?

-

You know what scares me now though?

Showering.

Cause when you're in the shower

You actually can't hear anything outside of the shower

So I'm just in there

Freaking out

And I do this thing

Like there's a wasp

I just stay really still

Really really still and

Then

Then I think

They won't get you

Now this is stupid for a number of reasons

Firstly of course being that if there was someone in the house

Standing still would not make me invisible

Secondly

That this "they" is already in the house

-

A woman I knew got killed in the shower.

Someone who used to come to the bar.

She got home.

Put away her things.
It was a blackout and she'd just gone right home.
And she gets into the shower –
Of course it's not like the shower would even work
But she was probably just thinking
This'll calm me down –
You know?
The routine
The motion
The association
And she gets out and

STEPH Please shut up.

STEPH is back to counting. This pattern continues anytime STEPH speaks: she breaks off, and then continues counting.

BELL Sorry. Thought we were sharing.

STEPH Just be quiet.

BELL Look we all have our coping strategies
Yours is state sanctioned counting
Mine happens to be listing all of the various ways I might die
Wonder which is healthier

STEPH Do you think they'll come back on soon?

BELL Maybe we shouldn't talk about it.

STEPH So you think they won't?

BELL You know this other woman I knew got killed in the bath
So it's not just showers.
But that was before the blackouts.
That was just her husband.

STEPH counts more aggressively.

BELL Actually hang on a second.
You're not going back to the beginning.

STEPH ignores her.

Hey!

Continues to ignore her

STEPH Please would you just let me do this

STEPH returns to counting.

Counts louder.

STEPH Steph.

31

STEPH It's meant to calm you down.
 Like meditating.

BELL I'm just still confused at how
 You know
 Verbally documenting the amount of time there's been a blackout
 Is meant to make you forget how long you've been in the blackout

STEPH No.
 It's not supposed to make you forget
 It's.
 Do you know mindfulness?

BELL No.
 My mind is pretty empty really

STEPH It's like this thing.
 It's this thing to pay more attention to the moment you're in
 Your thoughts and feelings in
 The present moment

BELL But I don't want to be in
 The Present Moment
 I want to be far far away from this exact present moment

STEPH I think you're missing the point.
 It's ancient.
 Like from Buddhism.

BELL Ok.

STEPH Is that all?

BELL You have explained basically nothing to me.
 But yes.
 I guess that's all.

STEPH I'm just gonna carry on.

STEPH returns to counting.

BELL

Yeah sure
You get back to the present.
I'll be in the future.
Wearing an expensive coat.
On the beach.

-

I know those images don't work together.
But when I like to imagine the future

STEPH counts louder

I like to imagine both of those things –
Being on the beach
Because who doesn't love the beach?
And wearing an expensive coat
One of the coats that you see women wearing and you go
Ohhhhhhhh
I know where they live.

And Louder

Cause I think
All of my ambitions come down to that
God I would love to own a really expensive coat

-

See before when I said someone would pay to watch you do this
I had in mind that the video would be cute
I mean obviously creepy as fuck
But you know ultimately cute
Like some kind of quaint school girl
Being scared and doing a weird little ritual
But as you get crazier
You go into deeper and deeper fetishes
And trust me that's much better
Those people pay way more

STEPH is furiously counting now.

Hey.
Let's do an experiment.
-
I revoke my former promise.
I will now only buy you a chocolate bar if you partake in my experiment.
-
I think by now we both understand that I'm just going to keep talking.
And honestly

In a while
You're gonna thank me for that
Cause I have a better way for you to deal with all of this.
See
When it used to get dark when I was a kid
Not cause of these blackouts
Before all this
Just normal darkness
We used to tell all these stories
Just to kind of escape
And I promise escape is better than the Present Moment

The counting is a little quieter

This one was my favourite.
You probably know it.
If not – you're gonna love it.
It has a moral and everything.
And you've always struck me as a very moral girl
-
So these two kids – boys - are out one night
They live in the country
So every night they go sit on this hill
You know
Like you would in the country
And they're bored
Like you would be if you're sat on a hill
But then one of them –
Let's call him.
Daniel.
Suddenly Daniel grabs the other boy.

Counting has pretty much stopped.

Will.
William.
Daniel says to William – can you see that – over there?
And he points out to this corner of a field
Where the field joins this big creepy wood
And William looks out and there's nothing
And Daniel goes –
Right there –

Look –
What's that?

STEPH Wait.
 Is this a scary story?
 You're telling a scary story?

BELL Well yeah of course

STEPH In here.
 Right now.

BELL Trust me.
 It's great exposure therapy

STEPH counts louder again.

So anyway.
William is looking out at where Daniel is pointing.
But he isn't really looking cause Daniel is kind of like this.
He scares easy.
So instead of looking – William is like let's go down there!
And Daniel freaks out
And really
I can't be bothered to get into this
Because he says all that boy shit that boys say
You know –
To get other boys to do things that are stupid
Just like –
Why are you being such a guuuuurrrrrrrl?
And all that stuff.
So eventually Daniel is like
Fine.
I'm not a girl!
I'm a proper boy!
I'll show you!
And they walk down to the bottom of the hill
And of course there isn't anything there
So Daniel calms down
And William relaxes – of course William was scared really
The Williams of the world are always scared really
Then – out of nowhere – he has a real reason to be scared

Something grabs him from behind
He turns to see ... something...?
Something that is kind of like a boy but isn't a boy?
And whatever it is
It pulls William close
And Daniel grabs him and tries to run away
But whatever it is - it's stronger
And it takes him and shows him something
Something Daniel can't see
And William's face responds
Not in horror
But just in understanding
And the thing is suddenly gone and
And Daniel asks what it was
And William just shrugs
It was nothing he says
Nothing
-
When they get back
Daniel wants to tell people
But what can he say?
Cause when he says – we saw a thing in the woods!
People say what was it?
And Daniel turns to William and says – tell them!
And William just shrugs
It was nothing
-
But see
Daniel starts to notice
William's shrug is more than just about the thing that happened
As time goes by
William responds to more and more with just a shrug
You going to lunch?
Shrug
You done your homework?
Shrug
You ok?
Shrug
And their friends notice
And their teachers notice
And their parents notice
-

And at some point he goes into some kind of home thing
And Daniel at some point goes to visit
He's nervous - really nervous
Mostly nervous of what he's gonna say
Cause William doesn't really say anything anymore
He just shrugs
And that's awkward
So Daniel goes in and sits down
And points out at the garden and says it looks nice
Like his mum had said on the way in
And William looks back at him
And William takes his hand
Which is weird anyway
And then he shows him something
And Daniel looks back at it.
And he understands
-
And when his mum comes to pick Daniel up later
And says how was William?
All she gets is a shrug.

Long pause. No counting.

STEPH	So what was it?
BELL	I dunno.
STEPH	So it's one of those dumb things - Where you're not supposed to know?
BELL	Yes.
STEPH	What was even the moral?
BELL	Never go outside. -
STEPH	- You know Charlie liked stories. One time we got caught in a blackout together. Right outside her house So we should have been fine

But she'd forgotten her keys.
And no one was home.
I was so angry.
How could she be so stupid?
Why hadn't she checked?
And there were these guys
That we could hear down the road
But we couldn't see obviously
And their voices got closer and closer
So we hid in this bike shed in her garden
It wasn't big enough to stand
So we just sat on the ground
It was wet.
Charlie said we should tell scary stories
She said that if you listen to these big scary stories
You'll get less scared of what's around you.

BELL And did it work?

STEPH I don't think I was less scared after.
But I guess it was nice to not think about the dark for a minute.

BELL Yeah.
Fuck you mindfulness.

STEPH I don't think you understand what mindfulness is.

BELL You're right.
I really don't.
And I really really think that you don't either.

STEPH Just because I couldn't explain it doesn't mean I don't understand it

BELL That's exactly what it means.

STEPH returns to counting.

BELL Stop that.
No chocolate yet.
The experiment isn't over
I'm revising it

STEPH Just let me do this

BELL Yeah yeah – I get it
Mindfulness
But let me try something else

STEPH What?

BELL Ok so.
Tell me.
What if I did help you find Tracy?

STEPH What is this?

STEPH now stops counting properly.

BELL So hypothetically –
You come to me and you say – can you help me find Tracy?

STEPH I did come to you and ask you to help me find Tracy

BELL Ok so hypothetically
Instead of saying no fuck off and never come back
I say
Yes
-
I say
I know where we can find her

STEPH Is this your way of telling me that you actually know where she is?

BELL So your school never taught you the meaning of hypothetical?

STEPH I think I was at (*states number she had reached in counting*)

BELL No come on
Seriously
What do you say?

STEPH If you told me that you knew how to find Tracy?

BELL Yes.

Hypothetically.

STEPH Well I would say I don't believe you
 Leave me alone

BELL Well to that I would say then why do you keep coming back here?
 After I've told you to fuck off hundreds of times

STEPH It wasn't hundreds

BELL It felt like hundreds.

STEPH This is so stupid.

BELL Yes.
 -
 No.
 You've asked me.
 And I tell you I know where to find Tracy
 What do you do?

STEPH Seriously?

BELL Deadly.

STEPH I guess I would ask you to take me to find her.

BELL Ok.
 And I would tell you that it's too dangerous
 Because you're just a little girl

STEPH Oh my god I hate you
 Why do you always do this to me?

BELL Convince me then.
 If you want to find Tracy.
 Convince me that you're not a little girl and that you can find her

STEPH I would say...
 What's your name?

BELL Bell.

STEPH Short for Annabel?

BELL No.
 Just Bell.
 Like a bell.

STEPH I would say - Bell.
 I am not a little girl.

BELL Oh yeah sorry
 You're almost 16

STEPH starts obnoxiously counting again

 You know why I liked you?

STEPH You liked me?

BELL Well no
 But I enjoyed you cause you were annoying and you wouldn't go away
 I really need you to be annoying right now

STEPH Ok fine.
 If you don't take me to find Tracy I will come back to this
 Disgusting
 Disgusting bar every single day until you take me to her

BELL You might get some chocolate after all

STEPH What are the conditions now?

BELL Who knows.

STEPH You should know.

BELL So I go.
 Well that would be fucking annoying.
 I'll take you.

STEPH That was easy.

BELL I say that I know a guy that Tracy used to work for.

STEPH Do you?

BELL Do I what?

STEPH Know a guy that Tracy used to work for?

BELL So hypothetical means that we're talking about
A kind of imagined scenario
So in this specific scenario

STEPH So you know a guy that Tracy used to work for.

BELL Yes. He runs this bar downtown.

STEPH So are you gonna take me to another bar?

BELL You didn't get laminated for nothing

STEPH What?

BELL So I take you to this bar
Or more like a club
Kind of like a snooker club
And it's pretty busy when we get there
All the tables are full

STEPH So now you're just full on making stuff up

BELL So we walk through the bar to this room at the back
It's this little office with slat windows

STEPH This is the stupidest thing in the whole world.
I thought you were like testing me or something?

BELL While I appreciate being seen as so strategic
This was seriously just a story
Come on.
You can do it too.
We're about to meet the guy.
Do you wanna say what the guy looks like?

STEPH I'm not doing this.

STEPH begins counting again.

BELL Fine.
So I guess he has to look like the first bad guy.
So just a basic villain.
Some sleazy fuck.
But nothing truly sinister –
Nothing lurking under the edge
Surface badness
So balding.
But whatever's left is waxed back
Pot belly
Under a tight shirt
Silk shirt
You know –
Shiny
And sweaty
Tight trousers
Big bulge
You know the type.
So we walk into his office
And he sees us
A girl dressed like me
And a girl dressed like you
And he thinks whatever it is that a guy like that thinks

STEPH Gross.

BELL I thought you weren't doing this?

And the counting continues.

And so whatever it is he's thinking
It means he doesn't ask any questions when I say
Come talk to us outside
He just follows
And I mean – what?
Did he think we were gonna fuck him in some back alley?
But clearly he did cause he lets us tie him up

And then
When he's all ready
Big grin
And a bigger bulge
Then I ask - where is Tracy?
And he's confused
So I ask again
And the grin fades
Not the bulge though
But he's still not getting it
And so I ask again but this time
With a knife under his eye
In that soft bit of skin
And now
Now he gets it
And he plays dumb
No wait.
He is dumb.
And on top of being dumb he plays dumb.
And he mumbles something about not knowing Tracy
And I'm calm –
Sure - you know Tracy –
She used to do some work for you
You know.
Sell stuff.
And buy stuff.
Tracy.
And he still keeps it up – who?
And I don't repeat now
Cause he gets it
I just push the knife
And push and push
And finally.
He says –
Right. OK.
I don't know where she is but I know Tracy.
And I stay calm
And say where could she be now?
And he looks back –
Smiles –
You think she's even alive?

-

No
 No
 No
 He doesn't –
 He says -

STEPH Wait.

BELL What?

STEPH He says Dean.

BELL Dean?

STEPH Yeah. Let's go back.

BELL Ok

STEPH So you're holding him up against the wall.
 With the knife.
 And something clicks. With him. It clicks.
 And he looks at you and he says.
 Dean.
 Tracy works for Dean now.
 And you flinch.
 Cause like.
 You know Dean.
 And that flinch means he pushes you off.
 And then he he he runs and

BELL And then you grab him -
 You grab him and take the knife out of my hand
 And you say something like –
 But not as stupid as -
 Nice try

STEPH So now I've got him –
 Knife under the chin
 Pointing right up
 And I'm like –

BELL You're like

I'm not good with knives
Actually.
I don't know.
I've never really had to use one on a person before.
But don't worry.
My hands have always been steady.

STEPH And so then I'm like
Dean – who is he?
And he points at you
He's like
She knows

BELL Then the knife slips
It goes right up into his mouth
Through his chin

STEPH No.
It doesn't slip.
I push it

BELL Yes.
Blood everywhere
And you just grin
While he just slumps

STEPH And I just pull the knife out
And I wipe it on my skirt
Cause I don't care about all that anymore

BELL And then we leave
Someone else can clean up that mess

STEPH That was awesome

BELL See
Fuck you mindfulness

STEPH Do you really know this guy?

BELL How many times...

STEPH Ok. So it's all about Dean now then.
 Who's Dean?

BELL He came from your brain

STEPH I think he's like
 See if the first guy –
 Was like you said
 A basic villain
 He has to be like the next level
 And like a a
 A more complex villain

BELL And what makes a more complex villain to you

STEPH Maybe he's rich

BELL So money equals complexity? Got it.

STEPH But that does mean he's scarier
 Cause he can like do what he wants and get away with it
 Cause he's important

BELL Oh my God
 You're learning the ways of the world in front of my very eyes
 I couldn't be prouder
 But one small flaw
 How does this rich and important man know someone like Tracy?
 Or me?

STEPH To put it in a way that I think you'll appreciate
 He has to get his kicks from somewhere

BELL And where did you learn that kind of language?

STEPH You know I think you'd have liked Charlie
 She sometimes spoke like you do

BELL I doubt that

STEPH So with Dean
 This has to be more personal

More involved
So him and Tracy should have been like
Together
A long time ago.
When he wasn't rich
And he was *not nice*
And you know this from her
So you warn me
You say – he's dangerous Steph
And for a second I hesitate
But then I say – where does he live?
To show that you know –
I'm ready
But you're scared

BELL Just chilled to the bone

STEPH No – you are
Cause you know him
And I can see you're scared.
So I say.
Bell.
I know it's scary but we have to do this.
For Charlie and for Tracy
-
And you say ok.
And so you take me there.
To some fancy building on the canal and.

BELL Is that where you live?

STEPH And we walk in but there are guards in the front
And we know they won't let us up
But I can see there's a fire escape

BELL You're a natural

STEPH And then
Then the lights go out

BELL Oh noooooooooo

STEPH Yes – and all the guards are in panic mode
 So we run to the fire escape
 And and and and
 And it's open and

BELL That was easy

STEPH And we run all the way up
 Cause his apartment is at the top
 It's the pent house
 And as we get in it's it's it's
 It's not dark
 Cause it's
 Cause he has this big fire
 And like
 And all the walls are windows
 I mean like the whole perimeter is just like glass
 You know?
 When they have that?
 And so we can see the whole city and
 And he's just there

BELL What's he like?

STEPH What?

BELL Your villain.
 Who is he?
 I need a picture

STEPH Well he's like
 He's like this big important rich guy
 So he's like wearing a suit

BELL No.
 He's not a suit guy.
 He's the smart casual guy
 But that kind of smart casual that only really rich people can do
 Like really elegant wool
 And really really well fitting jeans

STEPH And so he's sat looking at the fire

BELL No. Not yet.
 I don't know him.
 He's that kind of guy who always over tips
 And he'll always give this speech when he does
 About how he remembers where he came from
 And he makes sure all the waitresses know about it
 His biiiiiiiiig tip
 And he flirts with them in that kind of dad way of flirting

STEPH There's a dad way of flirting?

BELL Of course

STEPH Gross

BELL It's like how your dad flirts with his secretary

STEPH My dad does not flirt with his secretary

BELL I guess maybe not now that he's actually fucking her

STEPH Stop it

BELL Come on Steph
 You must know this
 Men like your dad are always fucking their secretaries

STEPH He is not

BELL Oh no – he is
 And every year for his birthday – not hers
 He gives her his company credit card for her to buy lingerie

STEPH You don't know this
 You don't know me

BELL Oh I know you
 I know your adulterating father
 I know your alcoholic mum
 Who ignores the crumpled strip club receipts in his pockets
 I know your older brother

Who bullied you mercilessly as a kid
But when you finally meet the man
Who'll make it possible for you to give up work forever
He'll give him this big speech about treating you right
And how he'll hunt him down and kill him if he ever hurts you
But really they just end up high fiving
Over their lap dancers at the bachelor party

STEPH What if I didn't even have a dad?

BELL Everyone has a dad
Or actually –
Everyone like you has a dad

STEPH But what if mine was gone
Or dead

BELL Is he?

STEPH Is he gone
Or is he dead?

BELL Either.

STEPH -
He's dead.

BELL Well it's not like anyone thought I was a good person anyway
How?
When?

STEPH Four years ago.
Early in the blackouts – it was the first really long one
He didn't come home one night
We waited and waited
Tried to find out something
But you know what it's like
Chaos
And then
Then we got the call
Car crash

BELL Oh fuck

STEPH Yeah.
 It was really hard.
 That's why I get so scared in the blackouts.
 I'm just thinking of him.

BELL I'm really sorry.

STEPH Oh my god I can't believe you believed me

BELL What?

STEPH My dad's alive
 He's a lawyer
 And he does work late

BELL Exactly.
 Cause he's fucking his secretary.
 -
 So please
 Continue
 The bad guy is sat in front of the fire

STEPH He sees us and he's not scared

BELL Why would he be?

STEPH But we're frozen

BELL And he just looks out of the big wall of windows and says
 Isn't it beautiful?

STEPH And now he asks why we're here
 And you come out with it right away.

BELL Tracy.
 Where is Tracy?

STEPH And he doesn't answer.
 Nothing

BELL And you say
 Tracy
 Where is she?

STEPH And he turns to you.

BELL Grinning
 And he says –
 Don't do this
 I'm letting you stay here
 Because I thought it might be fun
 Now – was I wrong?

STEPH And he takes a step towards you

BELL Well was I?

STEPH Another step

BELL And I'm trying to stare him down
 Where is Tracy?

STEPH But he keeps walking towards you
 Un-phased

BELL And I say it again
 But he keeps walking

STEPH -
 Maybe you put your hand through the wall?

BELL Maybe I put my hand through the wall?

STEPH You put your hand through the wall.
 Maybe you can just do that now.

BELL Maybe I can do that now?

STEPH Yeah. Why not?

BELL Ok.
 Maybe I put through my hand through the wall.

STEPH	And you pull out a bunch of cables. Two metres of electrical cable to be exact
BELL	What? Like a whip?
STEPH	Yes.
BELL	And so I whip him.
STEPH	You whip him. And you ask - where's Tracy?
BELL	No answer.
STEPH	And I can see where this is going. So I go into the kitchen and get a pot and some oil. While you tie him up.
BELL	With more cables. Hands out in front of him
STEPH	And I pour the oil into the pan. And I hold the pan over the fire.
BELL	And then. Then. I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I take his hands and I hold them above the pan by 8 inches.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I lower his hands 2 inches.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I lower his hands 2 inches.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?

STEPH	And I lower his hands 2 inches.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I lower his hands 2 inches. - - And in they go.
BELL	Well. That was useless. I mean Burning the skin off some guys hands is never useless but -
STEPH	Then let's go back.
BELL	What?
STEPH	You ask where is Tracy?
BELL	Where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I take the pan and I hold it above his head. He looks up.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I tilt the pan.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I tilt the pan.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I tilt the pan.
BELL	And I ask where is Tracy?
STEPH	And I tilt the pan. And it spills.
BELL	Again –

Fun
Very fun
But -

STEPH Let's go back.

BELL But.

STEPH You ask where is Tracy.
And I take the pan and I put it down.
I pry open his mouth
And keep it open by jamming in a coaster from the table.
And I hold the pan above the hole.

BELL And I ask where is Tracy?

STEPH And I tilt the pan.

BELL And I ask where is Tracy

STEPH And I tilt the pan and.

BELL And I ask where is Tracy?

STEPH No no. Right.
Go back.
No pan. I stand in front of him.
With nothing.
Just my hands.
You've tied him up and I stand in front of him.
And I ask where is Tracy?
Come on.
Where is she?
I know you know.
And then I stop - it's useless.
-
And
And I take my hand -
I take my hand and
And I undo his shirt.
Cotton.
The material is nice and I

I tell him the material is nice.
I open his shirt just enough so that we can see his chest.
His nice open chest.
And I.
I roll up my sleeves.
-
And I push my hand into his chest.
Just into his chest.
Through his skin and
Through his muscles
And I reach for his heart.
And I pull it out.
His heart.
And I hold it above him and it's beating still and dripping
And it's making that noise
bu-dum bu-dum bu-dum bu-dum
And he just stares - all alive still and he just can't understand
And I ask
I ask -
Not where is Tracy -
No
No -
Because maybe -
Just maybe -
So I ask - where is Charlie?

LIGHTS UP.

ACT TWO

Now for something real

Full bright light. They pause, blinded. The women look at each other, awkward. They pause for ages – too long.

STEPH That was fun.

BELL Better than counting

STEPH	You owe me chocolate
BELL	You didn't get to a million.
STEPH	But you said -
BELL	So are you gonna go then?
STEPH	But. It might come back.
BELL	Ok. So you want a drink? This is a bar remember
STEPH	Why don't we. Continue to try and find Tracy
BELL	So you want to go to some bars and murder some men? Cause even in make-believe world We didn't find Tracy
STEPH	So you really weren't testing me?
BELL	Like I said That was just entertainment Distraction
STEPH	And it worked - I wasn't scared
BELL	Distraction for me And you did well! I get so bored in blackouts
STEPH	I know you know something
BELL	So you want to do something real then?
STEPH	Real?
BELL	You want to take all the life lessons we learned from our little game

And apply them to the real life situation?

STEPH Well I guess yeah

BELL Ok.
Fine.
Tell me what happened when you went to the police station?

STEPH I told you what happened

BELL No
Paint the picture for me
Take me there

STEPH I went to the police and they sat me down in this room.
And they told me that it was an -

BELL No go back.
Which police station?
What was it like?

STEPH I dunno.
Just grey

BELL Are you saying grey because it was the colour grey?
Or grey because it's bleakness made it feel grey?

STEPH Well now that I think about it
Maybe the walls were actually kind of cream

BELL So bleak.
And who did you speak to?
At the desk?

STEPH Some guy behind a desk
And I asked if they could tell me about Charlie and

BELL And they just told you

STEPH No. I said I was her sister.

BELL So he just believed you?

STEPH Yeah...

BELL And you didn't have to prove it?
Cause I didn't think they'd go for your laminations

STEPH I just cried and.

BELL Oh Right. Of course. Crying!
How could I forget.
So then he told you?

STEPH No. He didn't tell me.

BELL Who then?

STEPH Why are we doing this again?

BELL You wanted real

STEPH I wanted to find Tracy

BELL You still want that chocolate

STEPH You know I've literally had chocolate in my bag this whole time

BELL Well thanks for sharing that
But come on who told you?

STEPH Well the guy at the desk didn't seem to know what to do with me
So he handed me over to this other guy

BELL A real policeman?

STEPH Well I guess
He had keys to the rooms and stuff

BELL Oh keys!
Of course keys that's what qualifies you
Did he have a uniform?

STEPH No

BELL So was he a detective?

STEPH I dunno

BELL Probably not. Detectives would be too busy.
Probably a trainee or something

STEPH You want me to carry on?

BELL Yes.

STEPH So he took me into this room.

BELL What did it look like?

STEPH It was just some room.

BELL Ok. I think we should do this.

STEPH What?

BELL Ok.
You be you and I'll be the guy at the desk.

STEPH This is weird.

BELL What being yourself?
You're not that bad.

STEPH Why are we doing this?

BELL I want to know.
Come on.
This is the station.
I'm the guy behind the desk.

STEPH No.
I don't like this.

BELL What am I like?

STEPH Bell.
 I'm not doing this.

BELL If you do it I will help you find Tracy

STEPH No you won't.

BELL I will.

STEPH I don't believe you.

BELL Well you'll only find out if you do it.

STEPH Fine.

BELL So what am I like?

STEPH I don't know
 You were just a man

BELL I think I'm balding.
 Not that much but I worry about it
 So I think it's more noticeable than it actually is
 And I think I'm fat
 Or fatter than I was
 So I feel it around my belt

STEPH Are you done?

BELL So you come in.

STEPH Do I just say what I said?

BELL Yes.

STEPH I say I want to hear about my sister

BELL And then I...?

STEPH You tell me you can't

BELL Sorry honey

Can't do that

STEPH And then I cry

BELL You don't wanna cry now?
I'm not really feeling the character

STEPH I say that my sister is missing
And you ask for my name

BELL What is your name?

STEPH Stephanie. Stephanie Jones and my sister is

BELL Did I ask you that?

STEPH You were nice.

BELL Sorry sweetie –
So what was your sister's name?

STEPH Charlie. No. Charlotte Jones.

BELL This is stupid.

STEPH Like I said.

BELL We should go straight to you being in the room with that guy.

STEPH What? No.

BELL No come on.
Just
Just tell me what the room was like

STEPH No.
You're never gonna help me.
I don't trust you.

BELL I guess you can leave then.

STEPH Fine.

The walls are white –
But peeling.
It's small.
But doesn't have enough furniture to be cramped
Just a little table and three chairs.
Space for four – but there's only three

BELL So the reception guy has handed you over to me
We come into this room and
And we sit down?

STEPH Ok so we sit down.
You pull out a chair for me.
You put your file down on the table
And then you sit down.
And then you explain to me all the stuff that happens in blackouts
And then
Cause I'm still crying
You give me some biscuits
And then you tell me we have to brave and strong
And these are hard times for everyone

BELL And what did you say?

STEPH I just listened.

BELL And that's it.

STEPH No.
-
You know actually.
He – he asked me.
Asked me about her.

BELL He asked you about Charlie?

STEPH Yeah he said.
I was crying and he said
Tell me about her.

BELL Right.

STEPH So I told him.

BELL What did you tell him?

STEPH I said that she.
 I dunno.
 I said she was clever.
 That she was funny.
 That we always played stupid games and.
 That she was.
 -
 But how could I describe her?
 Especially to him.
 Because.
 Cause I can't say to him what I would say to someone else. You know?

BELL -
 What would you say then?

STEPH I don't know. That she.
 That.
 That I felt guilty.
 That before she went
 Went
 Wherever
 That we had this stupid fight cause I
 I was hanging out with this girl she hates and
 And now I can never -

BELL Let's swap.

STEPH What?

BELL I'll be you.

STEPH Oh my God

BELL Where is my sister?

STEPH This wasn't how it happened

BELL Well then how did it happen?

What did he say about it?

STEPH I don't want to.

BELL He said it was an accident – how?

STEPH He said a generator.
-
But it wasn't. Was it?

BELL I just want to know what he said.

STEPH A generator.

BELL -
I'll do it.

STEPH Don't.

BELL Where did he stand?
Here.?
Ok.
-
Your sister. Charlie. She was out. And she.
-
She.

STEPH I think you should stop.

BELL Your sister.
Charlie.
She was out and there was a generator.
A shop using an illegal generator
And and because it was overworked.
Everything had been out for a while
And so it was too hot
And it exploded.
And unfortunately your sister was caught in the explosion.
These things happen.
-
Is that what he said?

STEPH	I guess kind of
BELL	Or hang on was it a car crash? Your sister Charlie She was out and the lights went out and the cars
STEPH	I said a generator
BELL	The cars started spinning on the road She was hit I'm sorry These things happen
STEPH	Stop it
BELL	Or was it a plane falling out of the sky Or electricity cables snapping Or or or a tree falling or
STEPH	I get it stop it
BELL	Swap back.
STEPH	No I.
BELL	I'm you. I've just heard all that and and I ask I ask if they have her body? - You have her body?
STEPH	- Yes.
BELL	And my mum. She's seen it?
STEPH	Yes.
BELL	Ok. And can I see it?
STEPH	I didn't do this.

BLACKOUT. Full blackout. They wait. The lights do not come back on.

BELL Well fuck this

A pause.

STEPH Maybe they know.

BELL What?

STEPH So ok.
Right.
Go back.

BELL Where?

STEPH So I've spoken to the receptionist.
He's passed me onto this guy
And he's awkward
Cause I'm crying and
And I'm a teenager and everything
And so he tries to make small talk
He points at my uniform
And he mentions what school it's from
Like is that from St Hilda's?
And I know
In that moment I know

BELL And what do you know?

STEPH That they've seen the uniform before
That they've seen a girl dressed like me before
That they've seen Charlie

BELL Hey honey we knew that

STEPH But they know more than they've been letting on
This guy knows
So I look at this guy
This nice normal guy

BELL Nice?
Normal?

STEPH I look at him and I know I can get him to talk
 This guy
 Who's left here
 To deal with crying teenagers
 And has to tell them this lie
 That it was an accident
 And I look at him
 And I think
 He's just human right?
 So I say to him
 Help me

BELL Good one

STEPH Help me

BELL But he didn't.

STEPH But now he does

BELL What are you gonna say?
 What if this was your sister? Your daughter?

STEPH No. I'm.
 I look at him and I say.

BELL You say
 There are times in every man's life when he must decide between
 What is right and what is easy?

STEPH Stop it.

BELL You say
 With great power comes great responsibility?

STEPH I say.
 I say how scared are you to go home?

BELL Fucking hell.

STEPH I say – how scared are you to go home?

Yeah?
Cause I'm scared.
I'm scared everyday.
-
Women are dying.
Women are being killed.
With everything that is going on.

BELL With *everything* that is going on.

STEPH And you must see this
You see it everyday
You see it more than most
-
Charlie saw it.
That's why she was scared.
Why she was so scared.
Do you know what happened to her?
Do you know what's happening out there?
I just ask him
What's happening?
Do you know?
Does anyone know?

BELL Yes.
People know.

STEPH And then he
He helps

BELL How does he help?

STEPH He.
He.

BELL Exactly.
Steph these people do not want to help you
Ok.
They don't give a shit

STEPH No he does
He takes me –

	He takes me to A –
BELL	There is nowhere to take you.
STEPH	Shut up - he
BELL	Except to the body –
STEPH	But there is no body...
BELL	What?
STEPH	You said it. There is no body.
BELL	That's not what I said.
STEPH	Go back
BELL	No
STEPH	Go back See When he talks about the uniform I know then I know that he's seen
BELL	Her massacred body?
STEPH	No. He knew the school. He spoke to her Alive.
BELL	Steph don't
STEPH	Maybe she
BELL	No.
STEPH	Look – stop it –

Maybe she

BELL No. "Maybe she" nothing

STEPH Help me Bell
Help me
She's alive

BELL No. She isn't.

STEPH Fine.
(To the AUDIENCE)
Hi everybody –
Now –
We're going to
We're going to make something together

BELL What are you doing?

STEPH I think that if all of us try really hard together
If we really try
I think we can find Charlie
And bring her here

BELL Stop it.

STEPH *(Back to BELL)*
Why did you keep insisting –
See the body
See the body
It's cause there isn't one

BELL There is.

STEPH But I didn't see it.

BELL No.
You didn't.
I did.

STEPH Fuck off
(To AUDIENCE)

Ok. So everyone.
Let's imagine.
Let's imagine a girl like me
My age.
But she's.
She's less blonde and she's
She's a little less tall
Like maybe by an inch
She'd say she was *as* tall but -

BELL Steph. Stop.
-
I went to the police and I saw the body.

STEPH *(To BELL)*
No.
I went to the police and I didn't see the body.
(Back to AUDIENCE)
Sorry everyone -
Let's get back to -

BELL You aren't listening.
I went to the police and I saw her body.

STEPH *(To BELL)*
What are you doing?

BELL I'm telling you I did see her.

STEPH Stop it.
(To AUDIENCE)
And she's wearing my uniform and she's

BELL I should have told you before.
But I'm telling you now.
I went to the police station and saw her body.

STEPH *(To BELL)*
No.

BELL Yes.

STEPH But it doesn't make any sense
 Why would you.
 The police wouldn't let you – you didn't know her.

BELL I did.

STEPH *(To AUDIENCE)*
 So I want you all to close your eyes.
 And take a deep breath.
 And then think really hard about this girl
 What is she like?
 We need to imagine in detail so -

BELL Charlie was my sister.
 -
 -
 You must have known.

STEPH And you just.

BELL I'm sorry.

STEPH So you saw her?
 -
 When?

BELL When you found out.

STEPH -----

BELL I'm sorry.
 I couldn't say it.
 It wasn't real it

STEPH You're lying.

BELL I'm not.
 Why do you think she came to see me?
 Tracy is our mum.

STEPH I feel sick.
 I feel sick.

I feel sick I feel sick I feel sick
 I feel sick I feel sick
 I feel sick
 -
 I hate you

BELL I'm sorry

STEPH I hate you I hate you I hate you

BELL She was my sister

STEPH You didn't know her

BELL I know.
 -
 Tell me about her.

STEPH No.

BELL Please?

STEPH What happened to her?
 No.
 Don't.
 I'll go see the body.
 I'll see for myself.

BELL Don't.

STEPH I'm gonna go.

BELL You shouldn't.

STEPH You told me to.

BELL That was bad.
 I was angry.
 I wanted to know if it was real.
 I wanted to hurt you.

STEPH Why?

BELL You look like her.

STEPH I'm gonna go see it.
I need to see it.

BELL Please. Don't.
You'll regret it.

STEPH Was it that bad?

BELL Just don't.

STEPH I can't believe you did this.

BELL She was my sister.
I don't see her for over ten years then she walks into my bar
I tell her to fuck off
And then there she is again
On a fucking
On some trolley and
-
And there were others
Other bodies
So many bodies
And
Even I didn't think it was that bad and
And
What's happening?

STEPH -
Fine I won't go.

Long pause.

LIGHTS UP. FULLY BRIGHT. BLINDING.

BELL Tell me about her.

STEPH No.

BELL Just. Please.

STEPH No. Please.

BELL Steph. Please.

STEPH No.

BELL I don't know anything about her.

STEPH Your own fault.

BELL She was taken from us.
I was only a kid

STEPH Then she walked into your bar.

BELL -
I remember when she was born.
Third of October.
I had the day off school.
Not like I didn't take a lot of days off anyway.
But that day was for her.
Tracy mentioned that she had a lot of hair.
And I was jealous.
I didn't know if it was a good thing –
But I was jealous anyway.

STEPH Stop it.

BELL She liked to eat the hard bits of toothpaste.
When she was a baby –
I'd feed them to her.

STEPH Please.

BELL Tell me.
-
You know her.

STEPH When she told me that her mum wasn't her *real* mum
And she told me this late
Only a few months before she...

And when she told me I was kind of jealous
Cause it meant she had this whole other life
Away from me and
And
And that's you

BELL Did she really want to find Tracy?

STEPH Yes.

BELL But really.

STEPH One day –
She'd never mentioned her.
And then it was an obsession.
She wanted to know her.
To know everything about her.
Even if it was bad.
-
Tell me about her.

BELL No.

STEPH Why?

BELL Cause look at you.

STEPH What about telling Charlie

BELL Same as looking at you.

STEPH Let's do it again.

BELL What?

STEPH Let's do a real scene.
I'll be Charlie. I walk into your bar.

BELL And what – I be me?

STEPH Yes.

BELL	No.
STEPH	Please. - So I guess she comes in
BELL	- And she tells me. Tells me she's looking for Tracy and. And I pretend I don't know who that is.
STEPH	Please. She says. Please. I'm her daughter. Charlotte. Charlotte Jones.
BELL	You're not.
STEPH	I thought we were -
BELL	Her name is not Charlotte. It's Charlie.
STEPH	Yeah. Charlie for short.
BELL	No. Charlie for all. As a kid – I liked names that could be for a boy or a girl So I chose Charlie. A name for a boy or a girl. So you could be anything you wanted to be. It's Charlie.
STEPH	Where is Tracy?
BELL	I don't know.
STEPH	Please. Don't lie if you know.
BELL	I wish I was.
STEPH	Tell me about her.

BELL No.

STEPH Is that cause you just don't want to tell me?
Or cause it's bad and you don't want to talk about it?

BELL See –
This is the problem with me talking about this with you –
Either I pretend it was all perfect –
Or I tell the truth and I feel like a traitor.

STEPH You know I dream about you.

BELL -
I hated you.

STEPH I'm sorry.

BELL Why?

STEPH For leaving.
For leaving you.

BELL You didn't choose.
But it wasn't all bad.
-
We tried to make a cake when I turned 10.
But we spilled it in the oven and broke it.
The cake and the oven.
So we scraped the batter onto a plate and ate that in front of the TV –
And that was fun.
It made me sick.
But it was fun.

STEPH -
I want to find her.

BELL Why?

STEPH I know you don't think this.
But my life hasn't just been super easy.
And I always felt that – whenever I felt shit and things were bad.

I'd.
I'd think about her.
Because I knew that she'd been through so much.
You know – I'd heard this and that.
I would think of her. Or you.
And I would think – they managed.
And somewhere inside me is the same stuff as inside them so.

BELL So you want to find her?

STEPH Yes.
Help me?

***PERUSAL COPY ONLY
HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL
DO NOT DISTRIBUTE***